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Children's Books

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Children's Books



Dinosaur Encore. Written by Patricia Mullins. Harper Collins Publishers, 1000 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton PA 18512. 1993. ISBN: 006-021-0699. 32 pp. US\$15.00.

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By popular demand and after millions of years, a cast of dinosaurs are back for a repeat performance. This time, however, they share center stage with a host of other reptiles and animals that currently roam the earth. The juxtaposition of the old with the new raises lots of fascinating questions, and poses lots of interesting possibilities. Technically, *Dinosaur Encore* is designated as an information book for preschoolers and young readers in elementary school. After several readings, however, we have come to believe that this picture book has much to offer both young and old readers alike. Readers, for instance, will delight in the innovative title of the story and the playful nature of the text, the tissue paper collage illustrations, and the imaginative page design of the book. This design gives readers some "entertaining surprises" by including both fold-out and lift-up pages. Several pages fold out sideways providing readers with a visual sense of the length of the height of dinosaurs.

In many ways, this simple picture book attempts to carve out new terrain by stretching the existing boundaries of information books. Text questions successfully focus reader

attention on unique characteristics of different species of dinosaurs. For example, *Which dinosaurs would be angrier than a butting billy goat? Which one would be crueller than a crocodile? Which one would run faster than an ostrich? Which ones would thunder louder than a wild stampede? Which one would stand taller than a teetering tower?* These questions introduce readers not only to a variety of dinosaurs, but also to a number of animals they may not often read about or be familiar with, like an emu, kangaroo, cockatoo, mongoose, and koala bear.

The book ends appropriately with the names and a brief description of the "cast" of dinosaurs in order of appearance. This concluding section is replete with lots of interesting information about each member of the cast, and extends the information readers naturally construct about dinosaurs during reading. Although this resource appears at the end of the book, it is an excellent starting point for readers to construct new questions and start new conversations about dinosaurs. Originally published in Australia, *Dinosaur Encore* was, not surprisingly, short-listed there for the 1994 Book of the Year award by the Children's Book Council of Australia. It is a well-deserved nomination for a book which expertly combines the joy of learning to read with the satisfaction of reading to learn.



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